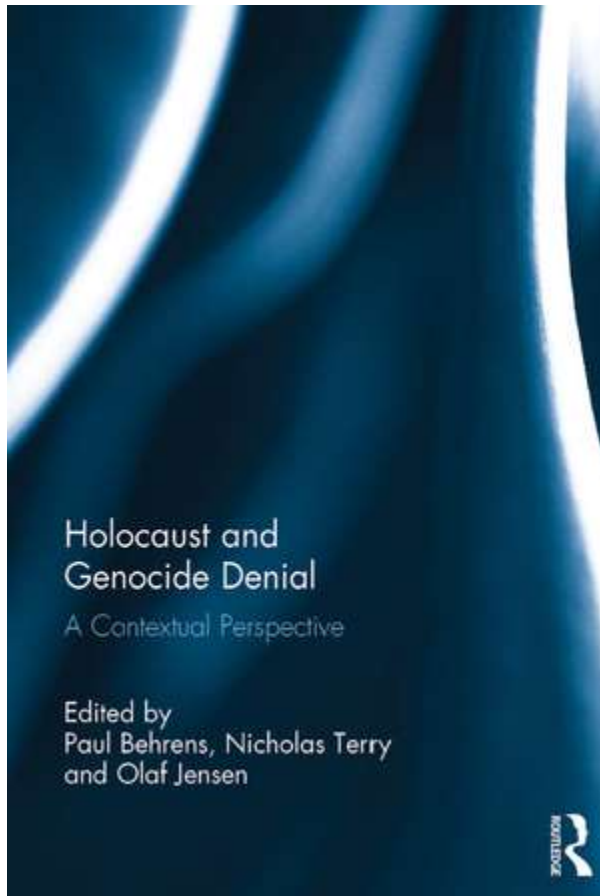


Holocaust and Genocide Denial: A Contextual Perspective

[Panagiotis Heliotis](#)

Paul Behrens, Nicholas Terry, Olaf Jensen (eds.), [Holocaust and Genocide Denial: A Contextual Perspective](#), Routledge, New York 2017; ISBN 9781138672734



Revisionists are well aware of the fact that orthodox historians avoid discussing Holocaust denial. But there are exceptions. Today we will take a look at the most recent: The book *Holocaust and Genocide Denial: A Contextual Perspective*, edited by Paul Behrens, Nicholas Terry and Olaf Jensen.

Before proceeding with the content, it should be noted that its price is inexplicably high (if not insane): \$123 for 270 pages! What the... did they use gold ink or something? Who exactly is supposed to read it? Do they even want people to read it? Who knows...

Anyway, here are the contents:

Introduction

PART I Development and concept of genocide denial

- 1. Alexander Ratcliffe: British Holocaust denial in embryo*
- 2. Countering Holocaust denial in relation to the Nuremberg trials*

3. *Holocaust denial in the age of web 2.0: negationist discourse since the Irving-Lipstadt trial*

PART II Holocaust and genocide denial around the world

4. *Silence and denial in Gulag testimonies: listening for the unspeakable*

5. *The presence of the past: on the significance of the Holocaust and the criminalisation of its negation in the Federal Republic of Germany*

6. *The prohibition of 'glorification of National Socialism' as an addition to the criminal provision on genocide denial: (Sect. 130 (4) of the German Criminal Code)*

7. *Reckoning with the past?: Rwanda's revised Genocide Ideology Law and international human rights law on freedom of expression*

8. *A view of the impact of genocide denial laws in Rwanda*

9. *Confronting genocide denial: using the law as a tool in combating genocide denial in Rwanda*

10. *Srebrenica and genocide denial in the former Yugoslavia: what has the ICTY done to address it?*

11. *Holocaust denial in Iran: Ahmadinejad, the 2006 Holocaust conference and international law*

12. *A centenary of denial: the case of the Armenian genocide*

PART III Dealing with Holocaust and genocide denial

13. *From introduction to implementation: first steps of the EU Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA against racism and xenophobia*

14. *Combating genocide denial via law: état des lieux of anti-denial legislation*

15. *Why not the law? Options for dealing with genocide and Holocaust denial*

Concluding thoughts

And here are the contributors along with some basic info:

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With such an array of scholars, is this the end for revisionism? Well, not really. This book is not an attempt at refuting revisionism. It's an analysis of its history, the methods employed by various countries to counter it, and other relevant matters. As the editors state:

"It is not the purpose of this book to engage in a debate with deniers, and it does not aim to elevate their statements to the level of academic discussion." (p. 3)

So the question is, can we expect an objective presentation? The answer is probably a clear No, but let's make sure. Holocaust denial and revisionists are basically covered in Part I. The rest of the book is mostly legal discussions. Let's get going.

Introduction

The Introduction begins with the usual preaching:

“The facts of the Holocaust are clear; the suffering of its millions of victims is beyond reasonable dispute. It is evidenced by the words and writings of those who escaped the machinery of death, and indeed of those who devised it and kept it in running order. The documentary and architectural proof is overwhelming. Films demonstrate the conditions of the concentration camps; there are witness statements of those who liberated Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz and the other places in which the human capacity for evil had been given a new definition. As if that were not enough, the events have been subjected to judicial examination – ranging from the trial of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg to trials in the 21st century; proceedings in which the killings, torture and mistreatment received meticulous examination and had to withstand scrutiny under adversarial systems.” (p. 1)

It continues:

“In light of this, it is legitimate to ask why Holocaust and genocide denial would merit a study in its own right. The claims of deniers, after all, carry a degree of absurdity which puts them well within the ranks of those who maintain that the landing on the Moon was a hoax and that the Earth is flat. And there is the risk that even the mention of such claims gives them a prominence that they do not deserve. Ignoring them seems the safer option and in due time, so the thinking goes, they will wither away. In that regard, however, the denial of mass violence is a rather different matter. There is nothing trivial about it. To the survivors of the events and their families, denial causes renewed suffering. It targets one of the few things that they salvaged from the horrors of the time: their right to the memory of the events, which is an integral part of their personalities. It typically attacks their dignity, for the denial of mass violence carries the implied message that the reports of these events had been an invention.” (ibid.)

And:

“Nor is such denial the pastime of a few eccentric individuals. Holocaust denial in particular has become an industry. The denialist movement has held conferences, publishes journals and has established organisations such as the ‘Institute for Historical Review’ and the ‘Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust’. Its followers are keen to occupy the spotlight in print media and on the internet.” (p. 2)

Norman Finkelstein, author of *The Holocaust Industry*, would probably burst out with neurotic laughter upon reading this. An industry by definition involves products, lots of advertising and publicity from the media and, of course, tons of money. A few journals, some conferences and a website are absolutely not up to par. And let us not forget that we read this in a book costing \$123, when revisionists give most of their books away for free. So it is already clear that this book is not aimed at anyone familiar with revisionism. Now let's have a closer look.

Denial and Its Purpose

We begin with two excerpts from Chapter 1, written by Mark Hobbs. After giving a brief history of Holocaust denial in Britain, our professor assures us that:

“Indeed, it seems today as if Holocaust denial is the main aspect of the far right ‘history’ and conspiracy theory, and that other conspiracy theories about Jews stem from this idea rather than the other way around.” (p. 12)

Of course, it's a usual slander to call Holocaust denial a conspiracy theory. But here's how you turn the tables (literally): Go to the Nuremberg trial records, the so-called *Blue Series*, and read Count One of the Indictment (Vol. 1, pp. 29-41). The title is **THE COMMON PLAN OR CONSPIRACY**, and in the text the word conspiracy appears no less than 15 times. The word conspirators appears 60 times! And as for the Holocaust:

"Of the 9,600,000 Jews who lived in the parts of Europe under Nazi domination, it is conservatively estimated that 5,700,000 have disappeared, most of them deliberately put to death by the Nazi conspirators."

In fact, the Holocaust itself, from the supposed code language of the Nazis to the complete erasure of the traces of the crime, fits much more with the concept of a conspiracy theory. Regardless, what is the purpose of this denialist "conspiracy theory"?

"Holocaust denial therefore provides a different mantle. It has been used, of course, to expunge the crimes of the Nazis and to present fascism and Nazism as legitimate alternatives to democratic institutions, as argued by Lipstadt. Today it is used as a flag to attract like-minded individuals and followers to its cause. Holocaust revisionism and negationism almost stand as an expression of anti-Semitic hatred which carefully camouflages overt anti-Semitic rhetoric, allowing its proponents to present a public face with the label of 'legitimate historical revisionism' while keeping the more ugly side of their anti-Semitic views behind closed doors and away from a public audience." (p. 19)

As argued by Deborah Lipstadt? Instead of addressing it here, I refer the reader to a [relevant article and documentary\[1\]](#) with no further comment.

Denial and Nuremberg

Chapter 2 was written by Michael Salter, and it's about countering Holocaust denial in relation to the Nuremberg trials. Salter first informs us that:

"Such denial includes specific claims that, notwithstanding well-established historical facts to the contrary, the Nazis did not murder c.[a?] 6 million Jews, that the notion of murderous gas chambers is a myth, and that any deaths of Jews occurring under the Nazis took place only because of wartime privations. Such denial persists despite the fact that this genocide is one of the best-documented instances, with a broad range of mutually corroborating and compelling evidence reaffirming its various elements." (p. 22)

For this "compelling evidence" Salter refers us to Evans, [Lipstadt, van Pelt, Pressac, Rees](#) and [Shermer/Grobman](#). Unfortunately for Salter, not only have all of the above authors' arguments been refuted, but some of them also have been proven to be liars and falsifiers. Perhaps this is why this accursed denial persists?

"Attempts at genocide denial are clearly flying in the face of proven historical evidence consisting of hundreds of original documents and witness testimony. The latter's authenticity was vindicated by a trial process in which defence lawyers found it nearly impossible to challenge, let alone discredit, their authenticity, other than in two or three irrelevant instances." (p. 26)

Well, this is no surprise considering Article 21 of the Tribunal's Charter:

“The Tribunal shall not require proof of facts of common knowledge but shall take judicial notice thereof. It shall also take judicial notice of official governmental documents and reports of the United Nations, including the acts and documents of the committees set up in the various allied countries for the investigation of war crimes, and of records and findings of military or other Tribunals of any of the United Nations.”

But don't wait for Salter to tell you about that (he doesn't). He continues as follows:

“Outside these ‘common sense’ reactions to instances of denial, virtually every serious scholarly study of the Nuremberg evidence and its implications is able to provide a mass of reasons discrediting Holocaust denial.” (ibid.)

No kidding. Well, in the words of Carlos Porter, all one needs to do in order to endanger the Holocaust a bit further, or perhaps even drive it into extinction, is to get the Nuremberg Trial transcript and read some of it. There one will discover “compelling evidence” such as the following:

- Steam chambers.
- Floors with electric current.
- Soap made from human fat.
- Lampshades, book covers and gloves made from human skin.
- Shrunken heads of inmates.
- Poisoning an entire city with poisoned soft drinks.
- Forcing prisoners to climb trees, then cut the trees down.
- Blast an entire village of 20,000 Jews with a sort of A-bomb.
- 1.5 million Majdanek victims.
- 4 million Auschwitz victims.

All this (and many, many more) are today in the trash can of history. In short, a study of the IMT transcript provides an insuperable mass of reasons discrediting Nuremberg “evidence”.

So, what does Salter think is the best way to counter denial?

“Nevertheless, it would, I suggest, prove counterproductive to engage in an open and public debate with David Irving et al. To do so would risk suggesting that established academic historians are recognising his work as the embodiment of genuine scholarship with which one is having merely an academic disagreement for purely scholarly reasons. This is already an excessive and unwarranted concession, which bears little relationship to reality. Attempts by genocide deniers to attract attention to their absurd and politically motivated claims by either involving or provoking public debates with established academics, thus need to be resisted. They must be rejected out of a concern that the very attempt at engagement contains an implicit endorsement that such claims somehow demand scholarly reactions, analysis. It presumes that they are at least potentially legitimate contributions to academic historical debate, which they are clearly not. The idea of my own work directing readers to take seriously Irving’s

claims as a debating partner is repugnant at every imaginable level: cognitive, political and ethical.” (p. 28)

Does this sound like a professor, or a religious zealot? Salter seems to sense this, so he tries to salvage something from the wreckage in the next paragraph:

“On the other hand, there are dangers in simply passing over in silence the claims of negationists when one has already secured full copies of original documentation that refutes them. This is particularly true where the latter’s implications are, when read in context, almost the opposite of that which Irving ascribes to them – for example in relation to the ‘tampering with evidence’ claim. In my view, there is a lot to be said for Lipstadt’s response in her 1993 book Denying the Holocaust. This focuses not on debating the truth-quality of the claims, as if these were legitimate contributions to academic debate. Instead, it concentrates on uncovering the questionable pseudo-analytical methods Irving and other Holocaust deniers deploy to falsify the historical record. At least as an instructive act of immunisation, there remains merit in highlighting the methods and techniques through which such polemical works deliberately misrepresent empirical archival evidence.”

The problem with this claim is that a [detailed revisionist study of Lipstadt’s book](#) shows precisely that these characterizations fit Lipstadt’s own book perfectly: **She** is the one who uses “questionable pseudo-analytical methods” in order “to falsify the historical record,” “and techniques through which” she “deliberately misrepresents empirical archival evidence.”

And what does Salter think of criminalization of denial?

“Should the State promote a mandatory core of basic truths about historical genocides in ways that are analogous to the social values defended by other laws against blasphemy, sedition, treason and defamation? If we accept the policy of granting such historical facts a privileged status of this kind, if only as the lesser evil, this would still provoke familiar human rights objections based on liberal objections to any form of ‘censorship’. In response, it is arguable that our participation in the public discourse of a liberal democratic State presupposes a minimal commitment to regulating truth-telling, good faith and respect for empirical evidence. In turn, such a democratic value commitment requires at least a symbolic form of legal enforcement, particularly in the extreme case represented by expressions of genocide denial oriented towards a fascistic politics.” (p. 31)

A “symbolic” form of legal enforcement? What exactly is symbolic with heavy fines, jail terms, family tragedies, along with professional and social ostracism, just for expressing an opinion on a historical matter? For the likes of Professor Salter, in order to prevent a fascistic politics, it is fine to **apply** fascistic politics as long as one is committed to democratic values!

Anyway, after going back and forth, Salter proposes this:

“Perhaps the best antidote to expressions of denial that falsely claim to be rooted firmly in historical fact is well-researched empirical/archival studies, which are clearly detached from any Zionist political agenda. The overall effect of such studies upon their readership is surely to place the issues raised by deniers into the same category of those of the flat Earth society.” (p. 32)

Keeping in mind the esteemed professor’s name, let’s take this with a grain of salt.

Denial and the Web

Chapter 3 is about Holocaust denial in the age of the Worldwide Web, and was written by Nick Terry. Offering a brief history of the movement after the Irving-Lipstadt trial, it begins with the following:

“Twenty-four years ago, Deborah Lipstadt labelled Holocaust denial a ‘growing assault on truth and memory’. How has the phenomenon of Holocaust denial developed in recent years? At first glance, denial appears to be everywhere on the internet. Tap the words into Google, and the curious internet surfer will be rewarded with more than 3.4 million hits to web pages within the English speaking world alone. Yet raw search engine results tell us little about the true size of actually existing Holocaust denial, or about the vitality of so-called ‘Holocaust Revisionism’ in the present day. Closer scrutiny of Holocaust denial on the internet suggests that despite a spate of highly publicised news stories, far from growing in recent years, the ‘Revisionist’ movement is arguably in relative decline.” (p. 34)

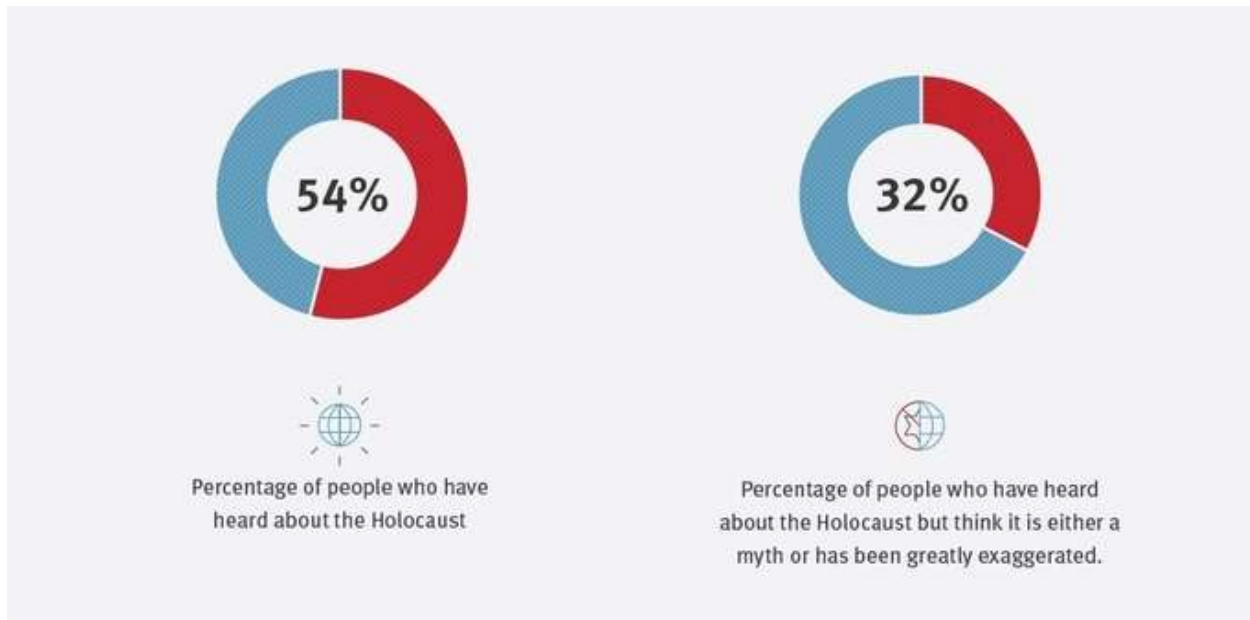
He also adds:

“Thus, while Holocaust denial continues to have great brand recognition, it now has surprisingly few customers.” (p. 35)

First of all, science is not a restaurant. It is the evidence that matters, not the customers. The soap story still has plenty of customers, but still, that doesn’t make it true. Now for the rest, Terry argues that after 2002 the Revisionist movement has been in decline (although earlier we were told it has become an industry), with his arguments focusing on the demise of IHR, the death or quitting of some revisionists, and the low Internet traffic of revisionist websites. Although some of this is true, are they enough to substantiate the claim?

The first thing to consider is that even before 2002 revisionism had never been even remotely “big.” It has always had only a few researchers with even fewer resources (and this has not changed). Sometimes it received more attention in the media (Faurisson, Zündel), but aside from that, it has never been a “movement” that could be described as skyrocketing. With the arrival of the Internet, however, revisionism became known and accessible to a much wider audience. So, what can we say about the present state of revisionism?

Let’s begin with the “customer” issue. [An ADL survey in 2014 gave the following results:](#)



[An ADL survey of 2014 to justify its existence and bolster the need for more Holocaust propaganda...](#)

If we are to trust the ADL, not only are there still many people who have never even heard of the Holocaust, but a remarkable 32% express doubts about it or clearly rejects it. Because of this, bombastic headlines such as “The World is Full of Holocaust Deniers” appeared on some web pages such as [The Atlantic](#).^[2]

A percentage of 32% is still a minority, but a significant one that cannot be the result of a decline.

So what about the research state of revisionism? Of this, there can be no doubt. From the pioneer studies of Rassinier and Butz, the era after 2002 saw the publication of dozens of revisionist works (books and videos) that are still growing, focusing on all aspects of the Holocaust, not at all a sign of decline. And there is more. On March 2017, all revisionist books, numbering in the hundreds, were **BANNED from Amazon**. Clearly, there are people out there, much more influential than Terry, who do not at all endorse his claims about a revisionist decline. And Terry does not utter a single word about this.

Here is how Terry summarizes his reasons for the alleged revisionist decline (p. 53):

1. Consistent social disapproval
2. Its political ineffectiveness
3. The ease of finding other ways of expressing anti-Semitism or delegitimising Israel
4. Loss of “market share” to other conspiracy theories
5. Inability to cope with the volume of recent Holocaust research
6. Lack of novelty

7. The ageing of the “movement”

Reasons 2 and 3 concern only neo-Nazi parties and the like. If they abandon Holocaust denial in order to become more mainstream, revisionism has nothing to lose, as it does not owe them anything in the first place. Reason 4 is unsubstantiated. Reasons 5 and 6 are wishful thinking, and they apply perfectly to the orthodox historians themselves. As for Reason 7, people may age, but ideas do not. Especially when they are backed up by the evidence.

Interestingly, the most important reason why revisionism is prevented from growing and succeeding is not listed – unless we force it into his first point of “social disapproval,” which would be a major downplaying of the issues involved:

- censorship by governments, social media platforms, media distributors and retailers, and the mass media
- denial of service by credit-card processing firms, banks, Internet service providers, etc.
- persecution through cancellation of tenancy agreements, labor and employment contracts, denial and revocation of academic degrees, etc.
- prosecution in a steadily growing number of countries, ending with fines and imprisonment of revisionists, which labels them “criminals,” turning them into the ultimate pariahs and outcasts.
- physical attacks by thugs, with government authorities looking the other way.

Now let’s see what Terry has to say about the revisionists themselves.

“Central to the codification of ‘Revisionism’ as the outright denial of the Holocaust was the French author Paul Rassinier, whose writings took on an implacably negationist stance from the end of the 1950s.” (p. 35)

Terry does not inform the reader that Rassinier had actually been a camp prisoner himself, because that would spoil his soup. He continues:

“A series of public scandals in France together with two widely publicised trials of Canadian neo-Nazi activist Ernst Zündel in 1985 and 1988 convinced ‘Revisionists’ that they now had momentum, a belief bolstered by the conversion of the right-wing popular historian David Irving to the ‘Revisionist’ cause and by a new-found emphasis on physical evidence.” (p. 36)

Those trials proved beyond any doubt that revisionism was something more than a silly conspiracy theory. Survivors were cross-examined for the first time, as well as the “Holocaust Pope” himself, Raul Hilberg. The pressure put on them by the defense attorney by a fusillade of precise questions was so much that both refused to appear for the second trial. Unsurprisingly, Terry neglects to mention any of this.

“This ‘forensic turn’ in negationism, exemplified by the infamous Leuchter report and its tests of cyanide traces in the ruins of the gas chambers of Birkenau, marked a shift from the pseudohistory of Rassinier and Faurisson towards pseudoscientific argumentation. After the errors of the Leuchter report were swiftly exposed, German negationists tried to improve on the gambit with a new forensic report by a

young German doctoral student of chemistry, Germar Rudolf, whose 'Rudolf Report' helped sustain a prolonged propaganda offensive in reunified Germany during the first half of the 1990s." (p. 37)

Terry does not bother to explain what exactly is pseudoscientific about focusing on physical evidence. Furthermore, the [Leuchter Report](#), aside from some deficiencies, remains in principle unrefuted, as well as the [Rudolf Report](#).

"Since 2000, the most prominent negationist researchers have been the Italian negationist Carlo Mattogno, active since 1985, the Swiss anti-Semite Jürgen Graf, active since the early 1990s, and the Swedish writer Thomas Kues (a pseudonym), the sole author of any note to emerge in third-phase 'Revisionism'. Mattogno in particular stands out for his hyperproductivity, having authored or co-authored close to 50 books and pamphlets in 30 years. Unlike the overwhelming majority of 'Revisionist' authors, Mattogno, Graf and Kues (MGK) cite primary sources and have conducted archival research, yet none of them is in fact a properly trained historian, nor does any of them possess more than a Master's degree in any other discipline. Thus, while MGK have undoubtedly raised the quality of negationist research to a new level, this has come at the expense of an increasing isolation and inability to communicate their ideas to other 'Revisionists', much less mainstream academics." (p. 41)

Here we go again. Don't pay attention to those deniers, they are not real historians, blah, blah, blah. Unfortunately, there is one little problem with this – or rather, there are three little problems:

One: This knife cuts both ways. Neither Hilberg nor Pressac, Lipstadt, Rees, van Pelt or Shermer, to name only a few, are "properly trained" historians. Yet this doesn't stop their works from being considered "standard" in the field.

Two: Many times being a properly trained historian is not nearly enough. When a plane crashes, we do not turn to historians for answers. It's the job of the qualified investigators to find out what happened. The same is true for any event. The situation may call for a trained chemist, physicist, doctor, archaeologist, navigator, engineer, geologist, astronomer, etc. Not only do orthodox Holocaust historians possess none of these qualifications, they never even bother with such things. They are, [as Dr. Faurisson put it](#), only paper historians.

Three: Something overlooked and always taken for granted: The most important qualification of a historian, and a scientist in general, is SINCERITY. No university in the world will train you to tell the truth. There is no degree in Sincerity. Training will give you the tools and some of the knowledge. But these won't stop you from lying if you wish – or if "social disapproval" – meaning threats of persecution and prosecution – move you to lie.

As for Terry's remark of MGK being unable to communicate their ideas to other revisionists and mainstream academics, it's one more instance of his wishful thinking. Revisionists know from anonymous and confidential feedback that some mainstream academics are listening. They don't speak out because they all realize they have to remain silent or even keep lying in order to avoid falling victim to "social disapproval."

"Pseudoscholarly 'Revisionism' bears all the hallmarks of a 'degenerating research programme', to use the terminology of the philosopher of science Imre Lakatos. In this regard, negationism mirrors a common tendency among conspiracy theory pseudoscholarship more generally. Not only are there simply fewer 'Revisionist' researchers, but their books have lengthened as the gurus are forced to

confront a larger body of evidence for the Holocaust. Moreover, denier research remains resolutely negationist, with significantly more effort expended attacking eyewitnesses, documents and forensic evidence generally thought to prove mass murder than in locating any evidence that might support 'Revisionist' conspiracy claims about Allied and Soviet manipulation, or which might prove an alternative explanation of the fate of the Jews in Nazi and Axis hands." (p. 42)

First, there is no "larger body of evidence for the Holocaust." Revisionists simply cover more and more topics in greater detail, while orthodox historians keep repeating the same things again and again. Second, the term "negationist" is clear misinformation. A real negationist stance is usually expressed in the form "I don't believe this". You can't fill book after book with such a stance. Revisionism is about setting the record straight. What happened and what did not. Zyklon was for killing lice, not prisoners. Furnaces were for cremation, not erasing the traces. Or put more simply: Santa Claus does not bring the presents. The parents do. Third, Terry's hallucinations on "'Revisionist' conspiracy claims about Allied and Soviet manipulation" are misleading. Revisionists researchers don't claim that there was such a conspiracy. The development of the orthodox Holocaust narrative was a highly complex process which cannot be explained by any kind of conspiracy.

"All of the remaining negationist gurus combine a deep and abiding ignorance of the overwhelming majority of recent Holocaust research with ad hominem attacks on historians and an obsessive 'refutational' style aimed at real or hallucinated debate partners, something which also marks out other 'revisionist' schools of history writing. Yet these arguments are largely howled into the void, since the response to MGK's work has been a deafening silence from academics. This in turn has led MGK to believe they are really onto something, in a classic illustration of the topsy-turvy circular logic of fringe pseudoscholars, since the lack of response from academics must mean that historians cannot refute the negationist gurus." (p. 43)

Of course, Terry does not give any examples of these supposed *ad hominem* attacks against historians. As for the deafening silence of academics, revisionists do not need any topsy-turvy logic. The at-best-average response by Shermer and Grobman as well as the way-below-average response by Lipstadt prove that academics have thrown in the towel.

So finally, who is this Nick Terry anyway? How many customers does **he** have? Well, despite being a university lecturer, for many years Terry has been nothing but a blogger. His output is practically zero. His only contribution is a response to revisionists available only as a downloadable pdf file. Academics totally ignore him. The revisionists, on the other hand, not being so cruel, devoted a considerable effort to his work, publishing an [entire two-volume book in response](#). On this, Terry comments in a footnote:

"A 1396-page response appeared in the autumn of 2013, bloated to more than twice the length of the refutation by 'fisking' it paragraph by paragraph, rendering the response largely unreadable." (p. 43)

Too long to be readable? Is that what properly trained historians are taught? Well, send him a postcard next time.

As a final note, Terry was supposed to publish the book [Auschwitz: The Practice of Extinction](#) in 2016. So far it appears on Amazon UK with no price and as "Currently Unavailable." Of course, we'll be here [if and when it eventually becomes available](#). Until then, so much for the properly trained historian Dr. Terry.

Dealing with Denial

As already noted, the rest of the book is about legal matters. But a few things from Chapter 15 written by Paul Behrens are worth mentioning. First, Behrens begins with the following:

“The disturbing effect of denialism manifests itself in various forms. One of its most troubling aspects must be seen in the implied message that it typically carries: that the survivors of grave atrocities are dishonest about their own experiences. Where such statements are made publicly or are directly addressed at victims, their consequences can be devastating: they impose new suffering on those who already have to deal with the traumatic consequences of the inhumane treatment to which they had been subjected in the past.” (p. 230)



[Holocaust liar Joseph Hirt. \(The Guardian\)](#)

Revisionists avoid implying. They justify their claims with documented facts. And as has been shown, most of the survivors are not deliberately dishonest. They are just victims of rumors and hearsay. But there have been deliberately dishonest individuals as well. [A recent example is one Joseph Hirt\[3\]](#) who gave public speeches in schools claiming to be an Auschwitz survivor. But his story turned out to be a complete fabrication. He was exposed by a history teacher who obviously would not agree with Behrens. Unfortunately, in science, logic comes before sentiment, whether we like it or not.

“For one, the ideas to which deniers subscribe do not disappear merely because their expression has been made punishable. Lechtholz-Zey is right when she points out that, in the age of the internet, the relevant ideas remain merely a mouse click away, and with that, the recruitment of new followers remains a reality. But even in societies in which denialism has no strong basis in the population, the link between the weakness of the movement and the threat of legal sanction is not a foregone conclusion. The fact that an average member of society might not fall prey to the efforts of deniers, may indeed have more to do with the educational efforts of the State (and the overwhelming force of the facts) than with the adoption of criminalisation. Crediting the criminal justice system with successes of this kind, means putting confidence in the law which the law may not deserve.” (p. 241)

To his credit, Behrens admits that laws against denial may not have the desired effect. His suggestions are worth quoting in full:

“But if the law is not the solution, alternatives must be offered that may achieve more efficient results. Various options have been explored in this chapter, but the most convincing approach might require a combination of several methods. It is suggested that the following aspects have an impact on this

consideration. First, genocide and Holocaust denial takes place in different societies and in different contexts. The identification of the most appropriate ratio of methods to counter denialism is therefore dependent on situational parameters. In some societies, the widespread nature of denial may require more of a communal effort, including a heightened emphasis on public education and the establishment of institutions capable of reaching out to society as a whole. Where denialism is promoted merely by a small minority within a society, the focus might shift to options for dealing with the leaders and followers of that movement. Second, not all deniers are cut from the same cloth. The political leader who built a following on denialism, the author whose prominence relies on denialist ideology, act from motivations which differ from those at the bottom of the movement, who may often not have given much thought to the evidence of the atrocities or indeed to the consequences of denialist activities. Genuine curiosity may occasionally be encountered in the latter group, but cannot be expected in the former, and the appropriate methods of dealing with the conduct of deniers will therefore have to vary accordingly. Third, even within a particular target group, a detailed assessment of the available methods is indispensable. The impact of an academic article on a juvenile delinquent may be doubted; the showing of a film on the atrocities that he denied might be more effective; the confrontation with actual physical remnants of international crimes and meetings with survivors have carried some success in the past. Fine-tuning these approaches is key to the development of a persuasive response mechanism; and that in turn requires a certain insight into the psychological conditioning of the followers of denialism. Since the disassociation from 'mainstream society' is often at the core of their ideology, the success of any option to counter denialism might well be measured not by the degree to which their exclusion from the community has been achieved, but by the degree to which society has managed to effect their reintegration." (p. 249)

Very good. If only Professor Behrens could convince some politicians...

Conclusion

This is a quite predictable book. There is no attempt to refute the revisionists, nor a clear presentation of their ideas. Instead we find the usual misinformation and slanders, and all this, sadly, by university professors and academics. Some contributors try to save the day, although not much. But then again, considering the threat of "social disapproval" hanging over everyone who doesn't scream "bloody murder" at the sight of a revisionist, that's probably all we could expect. At least the cover design is pretty neat.

Notes

- [1] <https://codoh.com/library/document/4637/>
- [2] Emma Green, *The Atlantic*, May 14, 2014; www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/05/the-world-is-full-of-holocaust-deniers/370870/
- [3] Alan Yuhas, "Man who claimed to have escaped Auschwitz admits he lied for years," *The Guardian*, June 24,

2016; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/24/holocaust-survivor-lied-joseph-hirt-auschwitz>

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